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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [EAID](#) [CN](#) [MZ](#)

SUBJECT: CHINESE AMBASSADOR PRIORITIZES POVERTY REDUCTION
IN MOZAMBIQUE

Classified By: Classified by Charge d'Affaires Todd C. Chapman, Reasons
1.4(b) & (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a November 27 meeting with the Charge, Chinese Ambassador to Mozambique Tiang Uang Seng said that China's goal in Mozambique is the reduction of poverty through efforts focused on agricultural assistance and health care. Ambassador Tiang showed particular interest in AFRICOM, USG training for the Mozambican military, and USAID programs for strengthening democracy. Ambassador Tiang was not receptive to having USG and Chinese experts work together on projects aimed at common goals, preferring instead a variety of approaches to the same goals. End Summary.

China's Goal in Mozambique: Poverty Reduction

¶2. (SBU) Charge and Poloff met November 27 with the elusive Chinese Ambassador to Mozambique Tiang Uang Seng and his English/Chinese translator at the Chinese Embassy two months following our original request. When asked about China's priorities in Mozambique, Tiang said the top priority was the reduction of poverty. He indicated that China's efforts are focused on agricultural training and medical assistance. China trains Mozambicans in Chinese techniques to improve crop yields. The Chinese also plan to provide 16 medical doctors to help treat malaria in Mozambique. When the Charge offered to have Chinese and USG experts work together in these two areas in Mozambique, Ambassador Tiang side-stepped the offer, saying there are many approaches to solving the same problem, and that there is strength in varied efforts.

Interest in USG Military, Democracy Programs

¶3. (C) The Charge provided Tiang with an overview of U.S. assistance programs in Mozambique, emphasizing health, agriculture and democracy programs. Tiang inquired about USG military involvement in Africa, asking about AFRICOM as well as the type of training provided by the U.S. military to the armed forces of Mozambique (FADM). The Charge provided an overview about AFRICOM and the U.S. military training programs. The Charge also mentioned training for peacekeeping operations as well as the boats given by the USG to the Mozambican Navy in response to the Mozambican government's request for assistance in monitoring illegal activities in their coastal waters. (Note: This was a veiled reference to the illegal fishing allegedly being conducted in Mozambican waters by Chinese ships. End Note) The Ambassador also showed interest in USG programs aimed at strengthening governance in municipalities. The meeting concluded with a vague commitment to meet again to further

discuss the full range of U.S. and Chinese assistance programs underway in Mozambique.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Ambassador Tiang's claim that China's top interest in Mozambique is the reduction of poverty appears disingenuous given China's aggressive commercial campaign in Mozambique to secure mineral rights and natural resources. With low-ball pricing, Chinese companies are winning many of the largest government contracts and Mozambican (and other international) companies are finding it difficult to compete.

China's donor diplomacy, funding one-off infrastructure projects such as the not-yet-completed national soccer stadium and the already-completed Foreign Ministry building, continues to win China friends in government and among the general populace. The somewhat reclusive Ambassador Tiang, even after six years in Guinea-Bissau and nine months in Mozambique, is not confident enough in his Portuguese language skills to hold formal meetings in Portuguese and he evidently does not speak English. He also rarely appears at receptions or hosts meetings with foreign diplomats. There might be areas for possible cooperation with China on development programs in Mozambique, but absent direct instructions from Beijing, Tiang does not seem in a hurry to pursue the possibility. END COMMENT.
Chapman